

Date: May 1, 1974

Place: Harper residence, 2115 Sherman, Evanston, Illinois.

Interview with: Mrs. Margaret Harper, wife of Milton Harper

Observations: During the previous interview with the interviewee, she protested of her inability to be of much help. This sentiment persisted, however she was nonetheless able to fill in many of the details suggested by the previous interview. But in fact, she was not much of a participant; hence, the vagueness. An interview with her husband preceded this interview. He was not present here.

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Q. Again, good evening, Mrs. Harper.

A. Thank you, but I still don't know if I can be of any help. I doubt it.

Q. What I would like to talk about first is the academic program at the high school. What courses it offered, and what courses you took.

A. I don't know all that they offered. I know that they had languages. I took a commercial course. We had typing, Gregg shorthand, business math, English, things like that.

Q. Did you have a foreign language?

A. No. I don't remember any other classes.

Q. Did you have a favorite?

A. Oh, that's so long ago. Yes, I remember a Miss Tembler who taught English...

Q. I'm sorry, but could you repeat that name, please?

A. Tembler, T E M B L E R (Spelled out)

Q. Thank you. You were speaking of her as your favorite.

A. Yes. She taught English.

Q. In discussing your courses you said "we had typing." How many other students were in the class?

A. I don't recall, but I'm sure that the school has records of that.

Q. Yes, I'll have to check. Mrs. Harper, a classmate was recently describing the schools to me, and one of the things that he said was that the school had very few activities. I don't recall talking about this with you before, but do you know if that was true?

A. I don't know. I'm sure that my husband does. I was never very much interested in school activities. I was not aware of a lot of things that went on.

Q. Did they have a class play, or a year book?

A. Yes. There was a yearbook. I think there was a drama club, too.

Q. Do you know if the school sponsored athletics for women?

A. I don't know. That's not my interest. The school would know.

Q. Your husband mentioned that he worked after school, caring for lawns, doing odd jobs. Of course you didn't do that, but did you work after school, or did you know of girls that did?

A. I don't know if other girls did, but I didn't.





Q. Looking back, Mrs. Harper, can you tell me what your feelings were about school?

A. Most of the time I enjoyed it. I've been to a few class reunions, but not recently. Schools then were different than they are now. We didn't go around as though we knew everything in those days. There were certainly no smart alecky flare-ups like you see today downtown..

Q. Do you think that you'll go to another reunion?

A. No.

Q. In your office I brought up the topic of Mr. Beardsley. What can you tell me about him?

A. He was the principal. He married Miss Rutheta Hunt. He was a fine principal. I never met him, but he always seemed well-dressed. He did a good job, I think, and everybody like him.

Do you think that we'll be much longer? I must do some things this evening. I'm sure that if you check some of the old newspapers down at the Historical Society there will be some information about him. The whole town appreciated him.

Q. I'm sorry. I'll try to hurry along. Did Mr. Beardsley try to get to know the students?

A. He was friendly if that's what you mean. But he never came into the lunch room and sat down with students; or at least I never saw it. He did give out report cards, grade cards, one at a time, calling out each student's name.

Q. It's interesting, and apparently important. I think that you are the third person to mention that. Your husband did, and so did another gentleman earlier in the week. You spoke rather kindly of him. Did other students?

A. I don't know. I didn't do much with other students.

Q. Mrs. Harper, what did you do after graduation?

A. I attended some secretarial school for some time, and then worked for Presbyterian Church.

Q. Do you know what some of the other graduates in your class did?

A. They didn't tell me and I didn't notice.

Q. Were there many blacks in the high school at that time?

A. There were a few blacks, only I didn't notice how many. Some of the wealthy citizens had black servants, so I guess there were black children in the school.

You asked about other people who graduated with me. Just a few weeks ago I met one person from my class who lived not too far from our house. Milton and I were having dinner at the Homestead Restaurant. That's the only person I've seen for quite some time, and I don't know what she was doing. Of course she's with her husband now. In Wilmette or North Evanston, I think.

Q. When we were talking about private schools before, at the Historical Society, I asked you if the children of wealthy parents attended the high school.

A. Of course there were some well-to-do young ladies. They were dressed rather neatly, I recall. But so was everybody. I really don't think the students that well.

Q. I have just one final question, then, which I meant to ask earlier.





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Did the school have any home economics or cooking courses?

A. I know there was one in the last year of grammar school. A cooking class. But that's all I know for sure.

Q. Thank you very much. You and Mr. Harper have both been quite helpful, your protests notwithstanding.

A. Well, thank you.

